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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 BRUSSELS 000014

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR EUR/ERA, EUR/RPM, S/CT, NP, IO/UNP
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/17/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PARM](#) [KNNP](#) [MARR](#) [MCAP](#) [EAID](#) [SOCI](#) [NATO](#) [OSCE](#) [UNSC](#) [EUN](#) [USEU](#) [BRUSSELS](#)
SUBJECT: EUROPEAN SECURITY STRATEGY IN CONTEXT: ANALYSIS
AND COMMENT

REF: A. USEU TODAY 12/11/03

- [B](#). USEU TODAY 12/05/03
- [C](#). USEU TODAY 10/30/03
- [D](#). USEU TODAY 10/24/03
- [E](#). USEU TODAY 10/09/03
- [F](#). 03 BRUSSELS 5594
- [G](#). 03 BRUSSELS 5520
- [H](#). 03 BRUSSELS 4424
- [I](#). 03 BRUSSELS 4143 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: USEU Poloff Van Reidhead for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d)

Summary and Comment

[1](#). (C) SUMMARY: The final draft of EU HiRep Javier Solana's European Security Strategy (ESS) -- adopted by EU heads of state at their December 12-13 Brussels Summit -- envisages a world of dangerous but preventable threats, multilateral solutions, and stabilizing partnerships. The ESS identifies five (up from the earlier draft's three) primary threats: terrorism, WMD proliferation, regional conflicts, state failure, and organized crime. The strategy highlights "effective multilateralism" as the key to dealing with these challenges, and recommends that the EU become more active, more capable and more coherent in its approach to new security challenges, and that it work more with key partners, especially the U.S. The revised ESS -- formally titled "A Secure Europe in a Better World" -- also recognizes the central role of NATO in European security, and highlights Berlin Plus as a valuable framework for NATO-EU strategic relations. As Secretary Powell said at the December 4 NATO-EU Ministerial, the ESS is a good basis for future cooperation.

[2](#). (C) SUMMARY CONTINUED: The revised ESS leaves unanswered the tough question of what to do when international rules are broken and multilateral efforts fail. It avoids, as did the earlier text, any discussion of when and under what conditions the EU would resort to the use of force (ref. I). Rather than address the issue head on, the EU hopes to avoid it altogether through "preventive engagement" and by strengthening the international system so that rules either will not or cannot be broken. But the EU still recognizes that this is only a partial, stopgap response. The ESS hints at what will surely be a contentious future debate by saying that Europe "must be ready to act" when the rules are broken. END SUMMARY.

[3](#). (C) COMMENT: This is the first time the EU has tried to develop an over-arching security concept, and reflects the sense after the Iraq crisis that the EU needed a better strategic framework for developing common positions to emerging crises. But the Iraq crisis only accelerated a process that was probably inevitable. The EU, while far from supranational, is considerably more than an international organization or a customs union. It is a union of states which, having already pooled sovereignty on a wide range of vital economic and commercial interests, now wants to speak with unity and credibility on security affairs. EU interlocutors, including Political and Security Committee Ambassadors and Council DG Robert Cooper, have told us time and again that among its other hats, the EU is fast becoming a security organization.

[4](#). (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: The ESS represents the current, if not ultimate, limit of European consensus on security. Wiggle room remains in the details, but for now, the EU has found its strategic voice: The EU is not yet ready to commit to pre-emptive use of force; the EU will renew its commitment to multilateral solutions, while recognizing the need to make them more effective; the EU will continue in partnership with the U.S., and honor its arrangement with NATO. We expect the EU to be increasingly assertive with its newfound strategic vision, and less nervous about its disagreements with the U.S.

[5](#). (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: If a crisis like Iraq were to erupt again now, Europe would be no less divided than it was

last year. But in five, ten or twenty years' time, the ESS and the common ground it represents can provide a foundation for a more united Europe -- even in a crisis like Iraq. Whether a united EU would agree with our position or not is unclear. We have an opportunity, however, to influence the outcome. A strategic security dialogue with EU policy planners, as offered by Secretary Powell at the November 18 U.S.-EU Ministerial, represents a valuable opportunity to influence the development of an increasingly assertive EU role in the world. While forcefully arguing our own positions -- on NATO, on responses to terrorism, proliferation, and regional crises -- we should also accept that the EU now has the elements of a distinctly European strategic worldview -- one that will usually if not always agree with our own, and one that will only strengthen over time. END COMMENT.

Note: The revised ESS is now available at
<http://ue.eu.int/pressdata/en/reports/78367.pdf>

Threats: Remembering the Old with the New

16. (C) The revised ESS retains the original text's description of terrorism and WMD proliferation as unprecedented and qualitatively different sorts of threats than the world has henceforth known. But it departs from the original by discussing in more depth the continuing danger posed by three conventional threats: state failure, organized crime, and regional conflict. The revised ESS underscores the role of the conventional threats in facilitating the new ones (terrorism and proliferation thrive on organized crime and failed states; regional conflict breeds extremism; and so forth). Senior Solana Advisor Niall Burgess tells us that the coming year will see further work to break down the concept of state failure into a taxonomy of failure -- i.e. weak, failing, failed -- that the EU can use to create targeted approaches for each stage (ref. E).

Confronting the Threats and the Use of Force

17. (C) The international press has made much in recent days of the ESS' substitute of the term "pre-emptive engagement," used in the first draft, for "preventive engagement," favored in the final (ref. B). Pundits lined up to claim the EU has watered down its security strategy by backing away from the more forceful word. Not wanting to sound too soft, the EU maintains that this semantic variation means nothing (an EU Troika told EUR/DAS Bradtke December 10 that it helps with translation into some EU languages). This is a debate over the lightest shades of gray. The widely variant defense doctrines and strategic traditions of EU member states ensured that both drafts of the ESS would be "soft." Possibly not until Europe faces an existential peril -- such as a devastating terrorist attack, or a WMD-armed rogue state in its neighborhood -- will the EU be able to join consensus on the tough questions surrounding justified use of military force.

18. (C) But having for the time being ruled out serious consideration of conditions for the use of force, what then is left for a security doctrine to discuss? What does the ESS mean when it says that the EU "needs to develop a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid, and when necessary, robust intervention?" How can the EU convince rule-breaking states that their actions will have serious consequences? How can Europe deter would-be proliferators and combat terrorism so that the devastating attack never happens?

19. (C) For the Europeans, the answer lies in "effective multilateralism" and assertive, full-spectrum engagement -- an approach for which the ESS says "the EU is particularly well equipped." To combat terrorism, the ESS calls for a "mixture of intelligence, police, judicial, military and other means" (the earlier draft said "intelligence, political, military and other means"). To counter proliferation, the EU should focus on export controls and political and economic pressures, while also tackling "the underlying political causes" of proliferation. (Note: The insistence on export controls and external pressures generally tracks with our own views, but the latter element problematically implies that proliferation is a justifiable response to regional insecurity.) Reflecting recent EU developments in nonproliferation policy, the revised ESS also says the EU is committed to universalizing and strengthening multilateral nonproliferation regimes.

10. (U) The ESS calls for political solutions to regional conflicts, but recognizes that military and police assets, as well as economic instruments and civilian reconstruction expertise, may be needed in the post-conflict stage. Failed states require a similar mix of instruments. On organized

crime, the revised strategy picks up where the earlier draft left off by acknowledging the special problem of criminal networks originating in the Balkans. The solution, it says, is democracy, good governance, and cooperation with local authorities.

More Multilateralism, Please

¶11. (C) The strategy makes a bold pitch for the EU to take a larger role in world affairs (commensurate with its role in economic and trade matters), and lays claim to the EU's self-ascribed comparative advantage in combined civil-military and post-conflict operations. Most importantly, it calls for threats to European security, new and old alike, to be addressed through "effective multilateralism" whenever possible.

¶12. (C) For the EU, the United Nations is the embodiment of legitimate multilateralism, so it comes as no surprise that the ESS calls the UN Charter "the fundamental framework for international relations." At the December 12-13 EU Summit, which adopted the ESS, European leaders went further by reaffirming "the deeply rooted commitment of the EU to make effective multilateralism a central element of its external actions, with at its heart a strong UN." The EU can be expected to enhance its collective position in the UN by leveraging the combined influence, and votes, of EU member states. Much of this effort is likely to arise from recommendations put forth in a European Commission paper released in September (and welcomed by heads of state at the December 12-13 EU Summit). That paper, titled "The European Union and the United Nations: The Choice of Multilateralism," calls on the EU to work for a more effective and efficient UN, to deepen the EU-UN relationship, including on peace and security issues, and to promote the EU's values and interests in UN debates (ref. H). The September EU-UN Joint Declaration on cooperation in crisis management provides early evidence of this rapidly deepening partnership.

¶13. (C) Unfortunately, the ESS fails to address adequately the question of what the EU should do if multilateral efforts fail. The Europeans still find it difficult to answer the question of how to deal with states or non-state actors that defy the international community, or seek to circumvent accepted rules of behavior. As we saw in their approach in Iraq, and are seeing again in Iran, the Europeans advocate carrot-and-stick diplomacy that is heavy on the carrot but extremely reluctant to use the stick.

¶14. (C) Nevertheless, the ESS stands firm where it can by declaring that the EU "must be ready to act when the rules are broken... Those who are unwilling (to play by the rules) should understand that there is a price to be paid, including in their relationship with the European Union." This is a small step, but one in the right direction. And for a union ruled by consensus, which has sometimes seemed to view multilateralism as both a means and an end, the assertion, no matter how mild, that forceful measures may sometimes be needed represents an evolving worldview that would have been all but unthinkable just a year or two ago.

What About the Neighbors?

¶15. (U) As with the earlier draft, the revised ESS devotes considerable attention to the problems of Europe's neighbors. Along with countering the new threats through effective multilateralism and preventive engagement, building a ring of security around the enlarged EU stands as a key European strategic objective. This is not new. For some years the EU has recognized that its expansion would bring it closer to the troubled areas of Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the Mediterranean rim. In response, the EU created mechanisms to promote stabilization, reform and development in these regions (the Wider Europe Initiative for Eastern and Southeastern Europe, the Stability and Association Process for the Balkans, and the Barcelona Process for the Mediterranean).

¶16. (C) The ESS broadens Europe's definition of neighborhood to include the Southern Caucasus and possibly even the Greater Middle East. New language in the revised ESS calls on the EU to "take a stronger and more active interest in the problems of the Southern Caucasus." Interlocutors in Solana's Policy Planning Unit and on the Council Secretariat's Southern Caucasus desk speak of a new EU

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willingness to consider near-term inclusion of the Southern Caucasus in the EU's Wider Europe Initiative (long a U.S. objective for EU action) (ref. A).

¶17. (C) On the Middle East, the EU's first priority is to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, then to wrestle

with other regional problems. Reflecting growing European frustrations over the stalled Roadmap, the revised ESS adds new language committing the EU to "remain engaged and ready to commit resources to the problem until it is solved." At the same time, the EU is developing a regional strategy for the Middle East that recognizes, much like our own, the need to promote reform throughout the Greater Middle East (ref. F). EU leaders welcomed this effort at the December 12-13 Summit, and asked HiRep Solana, along with the Council and Commission, to present a "joint report, within the implementation of the European Security Strategy," by March 2004. We expect this to be a high priority for the EU in the coming months.

More Active, Capable, Coherent?

18. (C) The ESS section on policy implications for Europe represents a call to action for European governments. The ESS argues that to address the threats the EU must become "more active, more coherent and more capable." EU governments need to act before situations deteriorate, and develop the will to increase defense spending and procurement coordination to ensure interoperability and avoid duplication. The ESS highlights planning for the EU armaments agency -- slated to begin work in 2004 -- as a good first step. This will have a positive impact as long as it is coordinated well with NATO and doesn't lead to a "Fortress Europe" procurement approach. The ESS also calls for greater civilian capacity to address the needs of crisis and post-crisis situations, and to increase intelligence sharing and diplomatic coordination among member states.

19. (C) There is also positive potential in the strategy's call for greater coherence. The EU's CFSP (foreign) and ESDP (defense) policies have thus far grown in awkward, disjointed ways. "The challenge now," the ESS argues, "is to bring together the different instruments and capabilities: European assistance programs, military and civilian capabilities from Member States and other instruments such as the European Development Fund." To the extent that this represents a willingness to link political, aid and trade relations to security concerns, it is positive. This is already underway with regard to nonproliferation: on November 17, the Council adopted a position requiring that all EU relations with third countries be linked to progress on upholding international nonproliferation norms (septel). Commission officials tell us that Syria, with which the Commission initialed an Association Agreement in December, will be the first country to sign the EU's new "nonproliferation clause" (ref. G).

Transatlantic Relations, NATO, and Russia

20. (C) The ESS acknowledges that the U.S. remains Europe's greatest ally and most valuable partner. The revised text calls the transatlantic relationship "irreplaceable," and says that "(the EU's) aim should be an effective and balanced partnership with the U.S.A." The call for an effective and balanced partnership, new to the revised ESS, reflects the European desire to enhance credibility by boosting (mostly military) capabilities; in so doing, the Europeans hope to earn a stronger voice in Washington.

21. (C) The revised ESS also adds positive new language on NATO: "The EU-NATO permanent arrangements, in particular Berlin Plus, enhance the operational capability of the EU and provide the framework for the strategic partnership between the two organizations in crisis management. This reflects our common determination to tackle the challenges of the new century." The positive decision to clarify NATO's role in European security, and to highlight Berlin Plus in particular, reflects what Solana Advisor Burgess described as a "widespread view that we got it wrong" in the first draft (ref. D). In that text, NATO was characterized as a reflection of the transatlantic relationship. In the final version, the Alliance is afforded an independent identity, reflected in the language above.

22. (C) The ESS paints a three-tier picture of the EU's strategic partnerships -- with the U.S. on top; Russia, China, India, Japan and Canada in the middle; and everybody else on the bottom. The revised ESS differs from the draft by separating the EU's relations with Russia from the rest of the middle tier. According to Burgess, member states agreed that the first draft failed to recognize the qualitative differences between the EU's relations with Russia and its relations with the other four (ref. C). Thus the revised ESS says of Russia: "We should continue to work for closer relations with Russia, a major factor in our security and prosperity. Respect for common values will reinforce progress towards a strategic partnership."